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Kurmanji

Kurmanji (Kurdish: Kurmancî, کورمانجی,[6] meaning ***Kurdish***),[7][8][9][10] also termed **Northern Kurdish**,[1][11][12][13] is the northern dialect[12][16] of the Kurdish languages, spoken predominantly in southeast Turkey, northwest and northeast Iran, northern Iraq, northern Syria and the Caucasus and Khorasan regions.[17] It is the most widely spoken form of Kurdish, and is a native language to some non-Kurdish minorities in Kurdistan as well, including Armenians,[18] Chechens, Circassians,[19] and Bulgarians.[20]

The earliest textual record of Kurmanji Kurdish dates back to approximately the 16th century and many prominent Kurdish poets like Ahmad Khani (1650–1707) wrote in this dialect.[21][9] Kurmanji Kurdish is also the common and ceremonial dialect of Yazidis.[22] Their sacred book *Mishefa Reş* and all prayers are written and spoken in Kurmanji.[23]

Kurmanji Kurdish	
Northern Kurdish	
Kurmancî	
Region	autochthonous to Kurdistan, Kurdish diaspora[1]
Native speakers	15 million (2009)[2]
Language family	Indo-European ▪ Indo-Iranian ▪ Iranian ▪ Western ▪ Northwestern ▪ Kurdish ▪ **Kurmanji Kurdish**
Dialects	Botani (Boti) Marashi Ashiti Bayezidi Hekari Shemdinani Badini Shikakî Silivî Mihemedî[1]
Writing system	Latin script in Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran Arabic script in Iraq Cyrillic script in Russia and Armenia.[1]
Official status	
Official language in	Kurdistan Region[1] Rojava[3][4]
Recognised minority language in	Armenia[1]
Language codes	
ISO 639-1	ku (https://www.loc.gov/standards/iso639-2/php/l

Contents

Phonology

Dialect continuum

Ezdîkî and Yazidi politics

See also

References

External links

Phonology

Phonological features in Kurmanji include the distinction between aspirated and unaspirated voiceless stops and the presence of facultative phonemes.[24][25] For example, Kurmanji Kurdish distinguishes between aspirated and unaspirated voiceless stops, which can be aspirated in all positions. Thus /p/ contrasts with /pʰ/, /t/ with /tʰ/, /k/ with /kʰ/, /q/ with /qʰ/, and the affricate /t͡ʃ/ with /t͡ʃʰ/.[25]

	angcodes_name.php?iso_639_1=ku)
ISO 639-3	kmr
Glottolog	nort2641 (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/nort2641)[5]
Linguasphere	58-AAA-a

Geographic distribution of the Kurdish languages spoken by Kurds

Kurmanji	Zaza
Sorani	Gorani
Southern	mixed areas

Dialect continuum

Kurmanji forms a dialect continuum of great variability. Loosely, six subdialect areas can be distinguished:[26]

- **Northwestern Kurmanji**, spoken in the Kahramanmaraş (in Kurmanji: *Meraş*), Malatya (*Meletî*) and Sivas (*Sêwaz*) provinces of Turkey.
- **Southwestern Kurmanji**, spoken in the Adıyaman (*Semsûr*), Gaziantep (*Entab*) and Şanlıurfa provinces of Turkey and the Aleppo Governorate of Syria.
- **Northern Kurmanji** or **Serhed Kurdish**, spoken mainly in the Ağrı (*Agirî*), Erzurum (*Erzerom*) and Muş (*Mûş*) provinces of Turkey, as well as adjacent areas.
- **Southern Kurmanji**, spoken in the Al-Hasakah Governorate in Syria, the Sinjar District in Iraq, and in several adjacent parts of Turkey centering on the Mardin and Batman provinces.
- **Southeastern Kurmanji** or **Badînî**, spoken in the Hakkâri province of Turkey and Dohuk Governorate and parts of Erbil Governorate of Iraqi Kurdistan.[27]
- **Anatolian Kurmanji** is spoken in central Anatolia, especially in Konya, Ankara, Aksaray, by Anatolian Kurds

Ezdîkî and Yazidi politics

Among some Yazidis, the glossonym Ezdîkî is used for Kurmanji to signify an attempt to erase their affiliation to Kurds. While Ezdîkî is no different from Kurmanji,[22][28][29][30][31] these efforts attempt to prove that Ezdîkî is an independent language which includes claims that it is a Semitic language. This has been criticized as not being based on scientific evidence and lacking scientific consensus.[32]

On January 25, 2002, Armenia ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and placed Kurdish under state protection.[33] However, because of the divided Yazidi community in Armenia and after strong criticism from parts of the community, the authorities chose to ratify the charter by mentioning both "Kurdish" and "Yezidi" as two separate languages.[34] This resulted in the term Êzdîkî being used by some researchers when delving into the question of minority languages in Armenia, since most Kurdish-speakers in Armenia are from the Yazidi group.[35] As a consequence of this move, Armenian universities offer language courses in both Kurmanji and Êzdîkî as two different dialects.[36]

See also

- Kurdish alphabets
- Sorani
- Southern Kurdish
- *Kurmancî*, a Kurdish linguistic magazine

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